17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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that under which the deceased held them. For example if a man dies leaving four sons, two married and two unmarried, the two unmarried sons will join the *gol* of their eldest married brother, who thereupon becomes to them *in loco parentis* and their *gol* leader. With this addition to his *gol* the eldest married brother will take also the cattle which used to belong to the deceased, his father, but he will hold them "on trust" for the marriage of these two brothers.

THE MARRIAGE TIE.

Marriage marks the assumption of personal responsibility, signified outwardly by the acquisition of a homestead. A man wishes to marry as many wives as he can because, although a man with one wife is a full member of society, he who has three or four (more being unusual outside the *Kwar Reth*), is a man of substance and power. This is because his *gol* will become large and powerful and in a position to dominate in its locality. Where an appeal to the spear is an ever present possibility there is definite strength in numbers. There is no place in society for batchelors or spinsters of mature age, and in fact with the exception of *Reth*'s daughters and the mentally deficient they hardly exist. Women outnumber men, so that polygyny is reasonable and almost necessary.

The marriage tie creates an obligation to pay cattle, but it is not created by or dependent upon such payment. To render a union a marriage only two things are essential. First there must be no positive barrier, (such as known consanguinity between the parties, whether through male or female lines of descent) and secondly there must be an offer and an acceptance. The offer and acceptance are symbolised by the man offering to the women's *gol* a sheep (*dyel dhok*). Acceptance of this sheep signifies acceptance of the suitor. The marriage is then complete. There follows the beer brewing (*tieng nogke*) and a wedding dance which is held in the woman's village and which serves the important purpose of fixing the marriage in the minds of the public. The completion of the cattle payments (*kwey*) may be delayed over a period of years, and until they are complete the woman usually continues to live in her own homestead where her husband may visit

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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mony?' asked the priest. 'Once,' promptly answered the catechumen, and then cautiously amended his answer, 'perhaps twice.' 'Oh,' said the Father, 'why only twice?' 'If a man marries and his wife dies, he can marry again, can't he?' 'Yo-es,' conceded the boy, 'he can marry again.' 'And if that second wife dies,' continued the Father, 'can't he marry a third time?' 'No,' said the boy. 'Why not?' 'Because he has no cows left' was the triumphant and conclusive reply. And that fairly well sums up the Shilluk's attitude towards matrimony. In common with the rest of his African brethren he is by inclination polygamous. In Africa nothing adds more to one's prestige than a multiplicity of wives. Fortunately, however, from our—the Catholic missionaries'—standpoint the tribe as a whole is of necessity monogamous. Except in the case of wealthy chiefs or fathers who rejoice in a quiverful of daughters to bring cattle into the family byre and no sons to take them out, the people generally are too poor to be able to scrape together the necessary cattle to provide for a second wife.

When a man dies his wife is not thereby released from her matrimonial obligations and free either to re-marry or to remain a widow. She is, as has been said, something that has been bought and paid for, part of the dead man's property, and is inherited together with the rest of his effects. If she is not the mother of the deceased's eldest son he will claim her, or if she is his mother or there is no son, or none old enough to marry, she will be taken by her brother-in-law or some other member of her husband's family. She belongs to that family and must remain in it to fulfil her duties as a wife and a mother to some member of it. If it so happened that there were no relative, no matter how remote, of her husband who could inherit her, then she might marry again outside it, but only on condition that a dowry is forthcoming to compensate her husband's family.

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A death among the Shilluk is the signal for an outburst of wailing on the part of the women. It is a high, shrill, screaming